

Security problem. We can make Social Security solvent until 2050 or beyond; we can make Medicare solvent until 2020. We still ought to make some other changes in it, but we can do those things. We can keep interest rates down. That means more business loans, more jobs, lower car payments, lower mortgage payments, lower credit card payments, lower college loan interest rates, paying the debt down. It means that—you know what Max has to do every year when he votes on a budget? The first thing he's got to do this year is to take over 13 cents of every dollar you pay in taxes and put it to the side to pay interest on the debt we've run up.

So when you think about what we're spending money on and you say, "Well, Max, I want more for education," or, "Max, I want a tax cut," or, "Max, I want you to spend more money on building us some more highways here"—just keep in mind, you're thinking, "Well, I'm giving him \$100, right, in taxes." Well, you're not. You're giving him \$87 in taxes because you've got to take 13 off the top just to pay interest on the debt we've run up.

Now, if we do what I'm suggesting, not only can we deal with the financial crisis in Social Security and Medicare, 15 years from now—and, again, it won't be me, I won't be there—but 15 years from now the Members of Congress will only be taking 2 cents on the dollar for interest on the debt. They'll be spending the money on Social Security, Medicare, education, investing in a peaceful world, giving you tax cuts, whatever. But don't you think it makes sense for us to take care of the Social Security and Medicare problems and to pay the debt down and to secure our economic strength? I mean, I think it makes a lot of sense.

So I came here today to help a man I admire. I came here today to thank you for sticking with me and for giving me the chance to serve and giving the country the chance to have these good things happen. And I'd like to make just a whoop-de-do speech. But I owe it to you to tell you that this new century will present us with unparalleled new opportunities and unforeseen new challenges. And our predecessors, the people that were here 5 years ago and 10 years ago and 15 years ago were up to their ears in

alligators. They did not have the opportunity that we have to take the confidence, the economic success, the things we've got now, and think about the long-term welfare of the country.

And if you believe what I said when I started and you clapped—50 years ago I was raised to believe that everybody could live out their dreams, but that we had responsibilities to one another to live in one community—then let's act like that now and give those gifts to our children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the Stephen F. Austin Ballroom at the Four Points Hotel Sheraton. In his remarks, he referred to Leslie Sandlin, wife of Representative Sandlin; Mayor John M. Garvis of Texarkana; event cohosts former Bowie County Judge Edward Miller, Texas Democratic Party Chair Molly Beth Malcolm, and Texarkana City Council member Willie Ray; John D. Rafaelli, owner, Four Points Hotel Sheraton; the President's brother, Roger Clinton, and his wife, Molly, and their son, Tyler; and the President's stepfather Richard Kelley. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization March 12, 1999

I welcome the accession today of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as NATO's newest members. The people of these three nations know what it means to lose their freedom. For years they struggled with dignity and courage to regain their freedom. And now they will help us defend it for many years to come. Their membership will make America safer. It will make NATO stronger. And it will help us realize our common vision of a Europe that is for the first time undivided, democratic, and at peace.

For 3 days, beginning on April 23, NATO's 19 members will meet in Washington for the 50th anniversary summit of our alliance, joined by our partners from across the new Europe. We will honor NATO's achievements in protecting peace and security. We will also prepare our alliance to meet the

challenges ahead, strengthen our partnership with Europe's newly democratic nations, and reaffirm our commitment that NATO's newest members will not be the last.

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Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Representative Sandlin in Texarkana
March 12, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to begin just by thanking you all for giving me such a wonderful, warm welcome tonight, coming up, saying hello, shaking my hand, seeing if I still knew how to write my name—[laughter]—taking the pictures. It's wonderful to be back here. I have had a lot of incredible times in this community over the last 24 years or so. And I've seen a lot of old friends here tonight, and I'm delighted to see you.

I came here for a lot of reasons, but I want to begin by just thanking Truman and Anita and the Joyces, the Youngs, the Pattersons, everybody else who had anything to do with this. When I was Governor, and when I started running for President, no one but my mother thought I could win. [Laughter] Maybe on a good day, Hillary did. [Laughter] I don't know if anybody else did. Truman Arnold was there for me. The people of Miller and Bowie Counties were there for me. And I have never forgotten it, and I never will.

I was sitting here looking at Truman, you know. I just want to tell you it's little things that mean a lot to me. I go all over the country, and I do these events. And I'm paying more attention to them, I think, than I ever have, maybe because they're not for me anymore because I can't run for anything. He thanked more people who worked for me who never get acknowledged by anybody, anywhere, tonight than anyone in the United States of America ever has at one of these events. And I appreciate that. That means a lot.

I also want to thank Molly Beth Malcolm, even though the Congressman ragged her a little bit for agreeing to be head of the Texas Democratic Party. No matter what you think,

it is alive and well, and we have a majority of the House delegation, and I hope we increase the numbers next time. And I thank you very much.

I'd like to thank the people who served the food, the people who cooked the food. This is the most I've gotten to eat at one of these things in a long time. [Laughter] And the people that let me eat, I appreciate that, too, although I really didn't need to. I enjoyed it. I'd like to thank the band. They were great.

You know, I wanted to be here tonight for a number of reasons. You know, I came home to Hope today, and we dedicated—we had a formal dedication of my—they call it my birthplace. I was actually born in a hospital, as near as I remember. [Laughter] But I lived there from the time I was born until I was 4 years old. And they restored this wonderful old house that was built in 1917, and the last time I saw it before they started in 1990, it needed condemning. But the people have done a wonderful job. And my kinfolks from all over here have given them memorabilia and things, and other people have contributed. A lady came from the Midwest today and stood out in that cold, driving rain, drove all the way from Iowa, I think, to give them a Lionel train, because she read that when I was 4 years old, I had a little Lionel train there. And she had one that was made in 1950, and she gave it to them. It was a wonderful thing for me. And I came here because I wanted to help Max Sandlin. And I'd like to tell you something about the connection between the two things.

As I said, I feel incredibly grateful to have had the chance to be President. I'm grateful for the people here who have supported me, I'm grateful for the people from Arkansas who went to Washington with me. Truman recognized Bob and Janis and Nancy Hernreich, and my good friend Mack McLarty's here, and we may have some more Arkansans here with me tonight.

But I want you to know that I hope that the good Lord gives me good health for a few more years, and I can spend my time being a citizen, trying to help other people I believe in stand up and fight for causes that I believe in. And after over 20 years in public life, I am acutely mindful of the fact